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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0934  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
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S E C R E T BEIRUT 000192

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STATE FOR DS/CC; DS/DSS/ITA; DS/IP/NEA; NEA/EX  
POSTS FOR RSO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/08/2018

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: BEIRUT EAC MEETING FEBRUARY 8, 2008

REF: BEIRUT 00172

Classified By: RSO Tom Depenbrock for reason 1.4 (d)

11. (SBU) Action Request - see para 9.

12. (SBU) At 0930 hours on February 8, 2008, Ambassador convened a meeting of the Emergency Action Committee (EAC). The DCM, RSO, MGMT, POL, USAID, PD, RAO, DAO, ODC, CONS, and INL were present.

13. (SBU) There are large-scale pro-government demonstrations planned for February 14, 2008 in the downtown Beirut areas to coincide with the third anniversary of the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. In February 2007, demonstrations were also held on the February 14 anniversary and two explosions took place the day before, February 13, in the Metn suburban area north of Beirut. Given the current political environment and the significance of the demonstration, the EAC agreed to limit official off-compound moves on February 13 and February 14, 2008 to those deemed mission essential and restrict all personal off-compound moves for those dates. Off compound moves to the Beirut International Airport (BIA) for the purpose of USG personnel arriving or departing Lebanon will continue as scheduled unless the security situation on the ground dictates otherwise. Pouch and mail runs to BIA will be restricted on those days.

15. (SBU) The Consular Section will issue a new Warden Message regarding the increased restrictions for official Americans on February 13 and 14. The Consular Section will cancel normal Consular operations on February 14, 2008 in response to the Government of Lebanon's decree making February 14 a holiday. Only emergency Consular services will offered on February 14. Only fifty applicants will be affected by the temporary cessation of services and they will be rescheduled.

16. (S) RAO reported that extremist groups are still a presence in the Palestinian camps. The lack of jurisdiction for both the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the Lebanese Internal Security Force (ISF) to enter those camps for the purposes of interdicting or arresting individuals and groups gives these extremist groups multiple safehavens and an ability to plan their operations unimpeded. The number of these extremist groups are growing and they bring with them practical experience learned in Afghanistan and Iraq. There are also a number of lesser known individuals who are veterans of these areas who want to create their own extremist groups.

17. (S) DAO reported that LAF forces have been pulling back and have begun to show less of a presence on the street in order to reduce the chances of tension following the January 27, 2008 incident where seven civilians died as a result of the LAF attempting to restore order after a member

of the Amal political movement was killed.

18. (S) The EAC reviewed the Embassy's tripwires which would lead to an Authorized Departure. The EAC evaluated the present situation and embassy actions over the last several weeks in response to direct and indirect threats, reported in recent EAC meeting cables. The EAC concluded that there was no need to change the current position, which is to not request Authorized Departure at this time, but keep the issue under active review. The EAC decided to update some tripwires, for example, specifying that not only cutbacks in commercial air service but also sustained blockage of the main routes to the airport would trigger EAC consideration of Authorized Departure.

#### ACTION REQUEST

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19. (S) The EAC also discussed the current inventory of armored vehicles. The EAC agreed that Embassy Beirut needs an inventory of vehicles that will blend in with vehicles common in Lebanon, which would include the step of acquiring more vehicles that are not Suburbans. Accordingly, the EAC requests that more non US-type vehicles, both sedans and SUVs be procured for this Post. Suggested examples of vehicles that would blend into the area would be BMW sedans and Toyota Land Cruisers. Embassy Beirut appreciates the efforts of DS to provide non Suburban type armored vehicles and fully appreciates the cost of non US-style vehicles,

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